

Mr. GIBBONS. Madam Speaker, as the 106th Congress comes to a close, I would like to highlight the achievements of this Republican Congress, achievements which I think make a difference in the lives of millions of Americans.

This Republican Congress is paying down the national debt, boosting education funding, and providing prescription drug coverage for millions of seniors, just to name a few of its significant accomplishments.

To expand on these, Madam Speaker, we reduced the national debt by more than \$500 billion, that is half a trillion dollars, and devoted 100 percent of the Social Security and Medicare Trust Funds to strengthen retirement security.

Also, Republicans increased funding for education by more than \$2 billion over the last year. We have given parents and local school officials, not Washington bureaucrats, more control over Federal education dollars.

Madam Speaker, we have also worked to ensure that in America no senior has to choose between putting food on the table and medicine in the cabinet. Our Republican \$40 billion plan establishes a voluntary, affordable prescription drug benefit that is available to every senior.

I am confident that history will be as good to this Republican-led Congress as we have been to the American people.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

TRIBUTE TO GAIL WEISS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. CLAY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CLAY. Madam Speaker, my colleagues are all aware of my impending departure at the end of this Congress. Since my announcement, not a day has gone by without someone wishing me their best or an organization or a university giving me a tribute in acknowledgment of my commitment to their causes.

For 32 years, I have served in this body representing the people of Missouri, but Madam Speaker, there is another person who has served beside me for those 32 years and will also leave this House at the end of this session. She was never elected to this body, never placed her signature on the corner of any bill that was placed in the hopper, but she has had a great impact on the proceedings of this House. That person, Madam Speaker, is Gail Weiss, the Democratic staff director of the Committee on Education and the Workforce.

At the end of the Johnson administration, she was a young legislative liaison in the Office of Economic Opportunity who chose not to stay on for the new Nixon administration. I was a new Member in need of a legislative assistant who knew the issues of my committee assignment, education and labor. Gail came to work for me, and other than for a brief sabbatical to live in London working for a British member of parliament, she has been at my side for the entire 32 years.

After a few years in my personal office, she additionally has assisted me on the Education and Labor staff, then the Post Office and Civil Service staff, where she became the queen of amending the Hatch Act. For 20 years, she carried the torch to grant political rights to Federal and postal workers, and finally stood proudly by my side as President Clinton signed my bill into law allowing for those rights. This was shortly after she stood by my side as President Clinton signed his first bill into law, another piece of Clay legislation that Gail helped to enact, the Family and Medical Leave Act.

As the last staff director of the Post Office and Civil Service Committee, she turned out the lights after my colleagues from the majority abolished that committee. She did so with a smile and the resolve that showed she was dedicated to serving this House. No words or phrases could tear down the commitment she had to help fight to improve the lives of working families and to raise the standard of living for the less fortunate among us.

Dedication and commitment are words often bantered about in tributes to Members of this House, but rarely have words so aptly described a staff member. Gail's demeanor has always been predicated upon hard work. Ask any of her colleagues to describe her, and they will always say fair, frank, honest, and hard working. She lived by the motto of never asking anyone to do anything that she would not do. There is no doubt about her toughness, her tenacity, and her frank New York mannerisms. But at the end of the battle, she always has a smile on her face.

When our party lost control of this House, many wondered how we could protect the ideals and philosophy that we were committed to. Gail helped to find a way to do just that. When I informed her that we would lose 75 percent of the staff we had operated with, she just smiled and thought of how we could get jobs for those who were leaving.

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So I am very fortunate that Gail has been committed to my legislative ideas. We all are blessed by the dedication of great staff members. But 32 years, 16 Congresses is a tenure of service rarely achieved. There are few legislative types that have served as long as Gail.

I once said that she was my fair lady. But she is one of the fairest ladies to have graced this House. I ask that my colleagues join me in expressing our thanks, appreciation, and admiration for her service, loyalty, and friendship. Because of her presence, my service in this House, in this Congress, has been for the better.

So, Madam Speaker, I thank Gail, my fair lady, for helping to make that possible.

GENERAL LEAVE

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks on the subject of my special order tonight.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Is there objection to the request of the gentlewoman from Ohio?

There was no objection.

RETIREMENT OF HON. TILLIE FOWLER

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Madam Speaker, I rise now to honor one of our colleagues who will be sorely missed next year in the United States House of Representatives, my good friend, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. TILLIE FOWLER).

TILLIE and I were both elected to Congress in 1992. As Members of the Class of 1992, we quickly became close friends. I consider her one of my best friends and confidants here in the House. She was a true friend through some of the toughest times of my personal life and professional career. She was a tremendous source of strength for me, and I will never ever forget her for that.

I have a great amount of admiration for TILLIE FOWLER. She has served the people of the Fourth District of Florida and our Nation with distinction, and I am so proud of her.

I have been privileged to serve in the Republican leadership with her. After her 1998 election, she was elected Vice Chair of the Republican Conference, making her the highest ranking woman in all of Congress.

I feel it so appropriate that TILLIE holds this position because I know for me and for many of my colleagues that she has been a true leader among leaders. She is a tough negotiator, a strong voice, and she never wavered from her heartfelt convictions.

As a senior Republican woman on the House Committee on Armed Services, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER) has demonstrated her expertise on defense issues. She has gained a reputation as a leading advocate of a

strong national defense and has worked with great success on behalf of the military personnel in her district and all around this country.

TILLIE also chairs the Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight and Emergency Management of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. She played a critical role in the passage of the 1998 reauthorization of the 6-year transportation bill, or TEA-21, which benefited so many of our districts and fulfilled our Nation's transportation needs.

Additionally, TILLIE has also been an advocate for women and children of our country. Together, we have worked with our colleagues to tackle issues, including children's health, child abuse prevention, providing treatment for breast and cervical cancer patients, providing relief from the marriage penalty, and bringing education flexibility to our schools, just to name a few. TILLIE has been a true champion on so many of these issues important to women and families.

TILLIE is an outstanding role model for those considering a career in politics. Before she was elected to the United States House of Representatives, she served as the first Republican and first woman president of the Jacksonville City Council. TILLIE has always led by example and did that so beautifully prior to becoming involved in elected politics herself.

Prior to her service on the Jacksonville City Council, TILLIE was active in her community, serving as president of the Junior League of Jacksonville, Chair of the Florida Humanities Council, and a volunteer for the American Red Cross and other important non-profits.

In fact, TILLIE started her career as a congressional staffer right here on Capitol Hill and later served as the White House counsel before moving back to Florida with her beloved husband, Buck. We should acknowledge the sacrifices of TILLIE's family, including her lovely little daughters, TILLIE ANNE and Elizabeth, who watched proudly as their mother accomplished so much for so many.

TILLIE FOWLER is a dedicated public servant who believes in keeping her word. When she was elected to the House in 1992, she stated that she intended to accomplish a lot in a short period of time. And she has done just that.

I want to personally thank TILLIE for being a public servant in this, the people's House. I will miss my good friend greatly. However, the House of Representatives is a better place as a result of her dedicated service.

I wish TILLIE the best of luck in her future endeavors. She will leave this Chamber knowing that she left a distinguished mark on this institution through her thoughtful leadership, her commonsense legislation, and she has

definitely left a mark on the hearts of the Members who knew her best and loved her most.

It is an honor to call TILLIE FOWLER a friend, and we wish her Godspeed.

Mr. SPENCE. Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to join in this tribute to a truly exceptional Member of Congress and great American, TILLIE FOWLER of Jacksonville, Florida. After eight years of dedicated service, has made the difficult decision to retire from Congress. Without question, she leaves behind a tremendous record of service, and returns to Florida having changed Congress and America for the better.

As the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, I have worked closely with TILLIE on the annual national defense authorization legislation and countless national security issues the committee has addressed. As a senior member of the committee and of the House leadership team, TILLIE has been an indispensable ally in helping us arrive at the best possible outcomes on so many difficult issues over the years. Each of these experiences further convinced me that TILLIE is truly committed to rebuilding our nation's military.

TILLIE served on two key panels of the House Armed Services Committee—the Subcommittee on Military Readiness and the Subcommittee on Military Installations and Facilities. Over her eight years in Congress, she proved herself to be a leader on both panels, earning the trust and confidence of her fellow committee members. TILLIE jumped headfirst into finding ways to stop the decline in military readiness, and her successful efforts to boost readiness budgets is largely responsible for reducing shortfalls in training and spare parts budgets.

America owes thanks to TILLIE for raising the level of discourse and concern about defense issues at the top levels of congressional leadership. During her time in the Congress, TILLIE has served as the Vice Chairman of the Republican Conference in the 106th Congress (the highest-ranking woman in Congress), a Deputy Majority Whip (1995 to present), and a member of the Republican Steering Committee (1995–1996 and 1999–2000). Throughout her service, TILLIE ensured that congressional leadership shares our concerns about declining U.S. military capabilities and provides the resources and attention necessary to fix it.

Her efforts have been particularly critical since the end of the cold war, when many Americans came to believe that the end of the Soviet threat was the end of the need for a strong United States military. TILLIE has always recognized the important role of America's military in ensuring the future welfare of the United States and our allies. And as she well knows, though the threats may have changed, the 21st century world is every bit as dangerous as it was a decade ago.

TILLIE departure from Congress is a loss to this institution, our nation, and the U.S. military. We will miss her leadership and her patriotism—she has been an inspiration to us all.

My wife, Debbie, joins me in offering our best wishes to TILLIE, her husband, Buck—who has also become a good friend—and her family as they move on to bigger and better things. In light of her strong support of the

U.S. military, especially the Navy, it is only fitting to send TILLIE off with the traditional Navy farewell wish—"Fair Winds and Following Seas!"

Mr. BOYD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to one of our colleagues in the House of Representatives a dear friend of mine from my home State of Florida, Congresswoman TILLIE FOWLER.

Representative FOWLER was first elected to the House in 1992. Since then, she has quickly climbed the leadership ladder and currently serves as Vice-Chairman of the Republican Conference. This notable accomplishment makes her the highest ranking woman in Congress and the only Floridian in the House Leadership. In addition to her role as Vice Chairman, Mrs. FOWLER also serves as a Deputy Majority Whip.

Throughout her career in Congress, Representative FOWLER has been an inexhaustible voice for the importance of a strong and ready national defense. Her Congressional District is home to many military installations, including Jacksonville's Mayport Naval Air Station. Mrs. FOWLER has worked not only to enhance the readiness of our military forces and to ensure that our combat equipment is modernized, but to improve the quality of life for military personnel and their dependents—the very reason that our military is the most powerful fighting force in the world.

Her political deftness and ability to bring people together have been a huge benefit to the people of Florida and our nation. For example, when allegations of sexual misconduct arose at several military training bases, Representative FOWLER was appointed to cochair a Congressional Task Force investigating the matter.

Mrs. FOWLER has also served on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. From her position on this committee, she worked with other key members of the Florida delegation to steer millions of needed transportation dollars to Florida when the House reauthorized the nation's transportation system. Representative FOWLER worked to ensure the state of Florida, long short-changed under past funding formulas, would get its fair share of federal transportation dollars. Thanks to her, Florida now receives \$440 million more each year than it had in the past to deal with the severe transportation obstacles that we face.

Mrs. FOWLER will leave Congress with a legacy that is her own; one of kindness, compassion, and accomplishment. She will forever serve as a role model to young women and it has been a pleasure and distinct honor to serve with her in the U.S. House of Representatives. Her leadership, intellect, charm and grace will be sorely missed when she retires from the House of Representatives at the end of the 106th Congress.

In closing, I wish to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Fowler family, her husband Buck and daughters, Tillie Anne and Elizabeth, for sharing their loving mother and adoring wife with the American people.

Mrs. MEEK of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to my friend and colleague, the gentlewoman from Florida, U.S. Representative TILLIE FOWLER. I am proud to

recognize the gentlewoman for her accomplishments and wish her continued success as she retires from the United States Congress.

TILLIE FOWLER is one of the hardest working and most effective Members of our Florida Delegation. She brings to the job a level of commitment, intelligence and thoughtfulness that transcends partisan considerations. In addition, TILLIE has been a pleasure to work with. I know I speak for Members on both sides of the aisle, when I say that her calm judgment and pleasant manner has been truly appreciated in our deliberations and will be sorely missed.

Congresswoman FOWLER has a long history of public and community service. In 1985, she was elected to the Jacksonville City Council and was soon named President of the City Council, the first woman and first Republican to serve in that role. After devoting more than two decades to serving the community of Jacksonville, TILLIE FOWLER was elected to the United States House of Representatives November 3rd, 1992. As a new member of Congress, she brought her energetic, compassionate, commonsense approach to getting things done in Washington. She has worked to end the governmental gridlock so that the real needs of the people—jobs, education, health care—can be addressed in a conservative but constructive manner.

As a Member serving on the Armed Services Committee, Congresswoman FOWLER has gained a reputation as a determined advocate of a strong national defense and she has worked with great success on behalf of the military personnel and facilities in her district and around the country. Congressional Quarterly said of Fowler's work on the committee, "FOWLER is a polite but persistent advocate for building new military, upgrading wharf facilities and the like." Her position on the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has provided her with a tremendous opportunity to improve our nation's roads, mass transit, water and public works infrastructure. Last year, her colleagues elected her to the 5th-ranking position in the House Republican Leadership, Vice Chairperson of the Republican Conference, making her the highest-ranking Republican woman in Congress and the only Floridian in the House Leadership.

In addition to her work in both local and national government, she has been active in many organizations which work to improve the quality of life in Jacksonville. She was a founding member of the Duval County Public Education Foundation, past president of the Junior League, past chairman of Volunteer Jacksonville, a member of the Mayor's Commission on the Status of Women and of Leadership Jacksonville. On the state level, she served for two years as the Chair of the Florida Endowment for the Humanities.

TILLIE, I think you can take great pride in your accomplishments here and in the imprint that you have made in this institution. We, who will be returning to the 107th Congress, will miss you. I wish you the very best in any challenge you undertake.

Mr. Speaker, Congresswoman FOWLER's decision not to run for a fifth term is a loss to this institution, to her colleagues, and in particular to her constituents. She promised that she would only serve four terms. It is very much

like TILLIE to keep her word and I am sad to see that the time has gone so fast. She will be remembered for her commitment and determination to bring about change for the people of her District and for her fair and skilled leadership in public service. The people of Florida's Fourth Congressional District will miss her and so will we.

Mr. ORTIZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute in the best bipartisan tradition to my colleague and my friend, Congresswoman TILLIE FOWLER of Florida. I can truly say I am sorry to see her go.

TILLIE and I have served together on the House Armed Services Committee during her entire tenure in the House of Representatives. I believe I can speak for my colleagues on the committee on both sides of the aisle when I say that she has never failed to impress us with her deep understanding and grasp of the issues and challenges facing our national defense structure. She constantly showed her skills as an attorney in her probing questioning of hearing witnesses and her summations to the committee members. She never backed away from a fight, but she never made it personal, either.

More particularly, TILLIE and I have worked together for these 6 years as members of the executive committee of the House Depot Caucus. Again, we put partisan differences aside as we fought with the Pentagon, industry and even our own colleagues here in the Congress in our efforts to ensure that the Department of Defense always has a ready and controlled source of repair for our vital weapon systems, namely our organic depots. We won most of those battles, and those victories are due to the strong consensus and teamwork that TILLIE helped forge among our Depot Caucus members, both Democrats and Republicans.

Mr. Speaker, I don't like term limits, and TILLIE FOWLER is one of the best reasons I know of to do away with them. While I admire her for sticking to her principles and adhering to her self-imposed limit of three terms in the House, I for one know that our nation is losing a fine public servant and our armed forces, including the Naval Academy where she is a member of the Board of Visitors, are losing a dedicated advocate. However, I expect we will see Tillie again in some other job at the national level which will put the skills she refined here in the House to good use for our country.

TILLIE, mi amiga y mi comadre, we will miss you here in the House and on the Armed Services Committee. Thank you for your service to this great institution and to our nation. Vaya con Dios!

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, as the 106th Congress draws to an end, we can celebrate many of our accomplishments—the Social Security lockbox, the third annual budget surplus in a row, and more than \$300 billion in debt reduction.

The end of the 106th Congress also means bidding farewell to many of our colleagues. Among the outstanding public servants who are stepping down is TILLIE FOWLER of Jacksonville. Her dedication and expertise will be sorely missed.

Mr. Speaker, my district covers all or part of nine counties and is contiguous to 6 other congressional districts—five of them in Florida. My district stretches from just outside of Or-

lando all the way to the Georgia border. This gives me the honor of representing a portion of Jacksonville, and this has given me the privilege of working closely with Congresswoman FOWLER on many issues.

Not so long ago, Jacksonville was looked upon as a small city supporting paper mills, a commercial port, and military bases. Today, the Jacksonville area numbers one million people and the city is recognized as a vibrant, growing urban center. Although it has shed some its past, Jacksonville maintains its strong commitment to our armed services as the host to major military facilities.

The successful transformation of Jacksonville over the past two decades owes much to TILLIE FOWLER. She has worked on behalf of the area as a volunteer, and as an elected official at the local and federal levels. This dedication to public service is a family trait.

TILLIE'S father, Culver Kidd, served for 42 years in the Georgia legislature; and her mother, Katherine Kidd, was a community leader. TILLIE learned about civic and local involvement in Milledgeville, Georgia. I should point out that Milledgeville has contributed a great deal to this nation. It was also the home of the distinguished writer Flannery O'Connor and the long-time Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee Carl Vinson.

From her small hometown, my colleague pursued her education at Emory University in Atlanta earning a B.A. in political science and late a J.D. Armed with her law degree, TILLIE came here to Washington, D.C., and worked on the staff of Congressman Robert Stephens of Georgia. Her strong talents were soon recognized and she was brought to the White House as a counsel in the Nixon Administration.

During this period, TILLIE not only expanded her professional horizons, she met and married a fellow attorney, L. Buck Fowler. In 1971, she moved with her husband to Jacksonville, Florida, where she set about the important job of raising a family, two daughters, Tillie Ann and Elizabeth. Although she put her career on hold, TILLIE did not ease up on public service. She volunteered her efforts as the President of the Junior League of Jacksonville, with the American Red Cross, and other charitable groups.

In 1985, she returned to the political scene with her election to the City Council and served on the council from 1985 through 1992. In 1989, she became President of the Jacksonville City Council, the first Republican and the first woman to hold that position. Although she retired from the council in 1992, her political career was just changing direction; she then successfully ran for Congress.

Congresswoman FOWLER returned to Washington with an ambitious agenda. She had vowed to make Mayport Naval Station a top priority and she succeeded. Through her position on the Armed Services Committee, she has built a reputation as an advocate of a strong national defense. She has improved the nation's commitment to military personnel and facilities in her district, throughout the nation, and around the world.

Her tenure on the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee has also resulted in major improvements for Florida. Florida is a rapidly growing state and deserves a greater share of

transportation funding. Through Mrs. FOWLER's efforts, Florida is receiving an additional \$440 million annually for its transportation needs. Due to her experience with the Transportation Committee, Congressman FOWLER was named Chairman of the newly created Subcommittee on Oversight, Investigations and Emergency Management.

While making her first run for Congress in 1992, Mrs. FOWLER offered to limit herself to four terms. Although she was asked by her leadership and her colleagues to reconsider, TILLIE is stepping down after four terms. After all, she has accomplished the goals she set out to achieve eight years ago.

We are losing more than an experienced lawmaker, we are losing a good friend. In fact, Mrs. FOWLER has been a good friend to the people of Florida, and perhaps more importantly, the men and women of our armed services. It has been an honor to serve and work with TILLIE and we will miss her.

TRIBUTE TO HON. TILLIE K. FOWLER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to join the gentlewoman from Ohio (Ms. PRYCE) to honor the remarkable career of my friend and colleague, TILLIE FOWLER.

TILLIE has served the Fourth District of Florida, this body, and her country with integrity and loyalty. She has been a role model and a friend to me during my freshman term here in Congress, and I will miss her greatly.

When I first met TILLIE, I knew we would get along well because of our similar background. TILLIE and I are two of only three Republican women attorneys in the House, and both of us have been very active in our home communities before coming to Washington.

At the time when TILLIE and I graduated from our law schools, there were very few women going into the legal profession and even fewer options for women attorneys. We had to create our own options, and TILLIE certainly did so by deciding to move to Washington and begin a career in public service.

She worked first as a congressional staffer, then as counsel in the Nixon administration before moving to Jacksonville, Florida, with her husband, Buck, to raise their daughters, Tillie and Elizabeth. TILLIE established a solid reputation in Jacksonville as a local leader long before running for Congress. She was president of the Junior League, chairman of the Florida Humanities Council, and president of the City Council.

Because of this background, TILLIE is dedicated to maintaining excellent relations with her constituents. TILLIE serves her district with pride, which you can tell just by walking into her

office. In addition to the Jacksonville Jaguars football helmet proudly displayed in her office, artwork from her district lines the walls, and books around her district decorate the reception area.

From the beginning, TILLIE made strong national defense one of her top priorities. When bases around the country were being closed in the early 1990's, TILLIE fought to ensure that two of the bases in Jacksonville were kept open. Because of such dedication, she is known and admired by the military community.

Our Tuesday Lunch Bunch relies heavily on her expertise in military affairs. As such an effective leader, TILLIE has been the true role model, not only for those of us who follow her in Congress but for people everywhere.

An even greater testament to her character and leadership is that not only do so many Members respect and admire her but that her own staff does as well. Her staff is extremely loyal to her and most of them have been with her for many years.

TILLIE established herself as the leader from her first day in Congress. As a freshman, she was elected co-chair of the Freshmen Republican Task Force; and in her second term, she became a deputy whip. She is currently the chairman of the Committee on Transportation Subcommittee on Investigations, Oversight and Emergency Management and is the senior Republican woman on the Committee on Armed Services.

As Vice Chair of the Republican Conference, she is not only the highest ranking woman in Congress but the first Floridian to hold the position. With such a record of leadership, it is no wonder she was elected unopposed in 1994, 1996, and 1998.

A few weeks ago, I heard a fellow Member on the floor affectionately refer to TILLIE as a real-life Steel Magnolia. I could not agree more. In fact, TILLIE takes great pride in being referred to by Working Women Magazine as a drill sergeant disguised as a Southern belle.

Throughout her career, TILLIE has always been dedicated to standing up for what is right. The strength of character has made her a great asset to this body.

TILLIE has been a true friend, and we will all miss her leadership. However, I am very confident to say that this is not, as they say, farewell and not goodbye. I know this will not be the last time that we will hear from TILLIE FOWLER. I look forward to seeing what she will do next because I know that, in whatever capacity she chooses to serve, she will serve her country and the good people of Florida with integrity, courage, and unending enthusiasm.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, will the gentlewoman yield?

Mrs. BIGGERT. I yield to the gentleman from Alabama.

Mr. CALLAHAN. Mr. Speaker, I want to join with those of us who are praising TILLIE FOWLER to tell them that I had the opportunity to be in Jacksonville and give the commencement address to the Jacksonville University senior class; and while there, I had the opportunity to meet with most all of the leaders of Jacksonville.

Up here it is easy almost to be a hero amongst ourselves. But we are seldom a hero in our own hometown. And the respect that TILLIE FOWLER has in her hometown is something that is almost astonishing. Every business leader there praised her. They were so happy to have her here. And they knew that she was term-limiting herself and they knew that she was not coming back, and they were remorseful of that.

I think it is a great compliment that we also recognize that not only is she a hero to us, but TILLIE FOWLER is a hero in her own hometown.

TRIBUTE TO HON. TILLIE K. FOWLER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mrs. BIGGERT). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. THURMAN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. THURMAN. Madam Speaker, I too rise today to pay tribute to an extraordinary woman and someone I call a friend, the Honorable TILLIE K. FOWLER.

Representative FOWLER is a dynamic and compassionate leader, who I am sorry to say is retiring this year from Congress after 8 years of dedicated service to the people of Florida.

As the daughter of an esteemed and respected member of the Georgia legislature, Mrs. FOWLER grew up with a commitment to public service. Certainly, in the Fowler family, you could say the apple does not fall far from the tree.

After serving as a White House aide during the Nixon administrations, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER) moved to Jacksonville, Florida, to start a political career of her own. From 1985 to 1992, she served on the Jacksonville City Council with distinction. During that period, the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. FOWLER) became the council's first woman president.

Her experience in Jacksonville prepared her to seek higher office by shaping her into an innovative and effective leader.

After being elected to Congress in 1992, Representative FOWLER secured appointments on both the House Committee on Armed Services and on the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. She also earned the esteemed title of Vice Chair of the Republican Conference, making her the